Amateur Radio Newslin(tm) Report 1385 – February 27, 2004

Amateur Radio Newsline report number 1385 with a release date of Friday, February 27, 2004 to follow in 5-4-3-2-1.

The following is a Q-S-T. Another proposal on restructuring and more on the fight against B-P-L highlight Amateur Radio Newsline report number 1385 coming your way right now.

(Billboard Cart Here)

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RESTRUCTURING: A COUNTER PROPOSAL TO THE ARRL

Just as we all thought it was quieting down, restructuring of the United States Amateur Radio Service is front and center once again. This, as a small group that opposes the quantity over quality approach takes a massive counter proposal to the FCC. The group is headquarted in Florence, Alabama and Amateur Radio Newsline’s David Black, KB4KCH, is at our South-East Bureau in near-by Birmingham, with more:

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Robin Gist, K4VU, listened to the ARRL’s plan to restructure amateur radio and didn't like it.

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Gist and five other hams who make up a group called the Radio Amateur Foundation, drew up their own plans for restructuring ham radio. Their 59-pages of suggestions are now in the hands of the FCC. Gist calls the Foundation's petition a comprehensive plan for progressive and thoughtful restructuring. The group suggests taking the Technician class license, making a few changes, and turning it into amateur radio's entry level license. Gist is not pleased with the League's plans for the Technician license:

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The group suggests giving Technician class hams restricted HF privileges. And it strongly advocates keeping the code--5-word-per-minute Morse code proficiency would be maintained for General and Extra class licenses. Keeping Code, Gist says, is important to help amateurs provide emergency communications.

Under the foundation's proposal, the Novice and Advanced licenses would no longer exist. Current Novice and Advanced license holders would automatically be upgraded to the next category--a novice would become a Technician and an Advanced class ham would become an Extra.

Another big change comes in amateur radio testing under the Foundation's plans.

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The Foundation suggests not releasing question pool questions to the public.

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Gist believes hams should have to wait at least 10 days before taking a failed amateur radio license test again.

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Gist says amateur radio should be quality over quantity. A service of radio operators who have a sense of value and appreciation for amateur radio. That is what Gist says the Foundation's goals are really all about.

>From the Southeastern Bureau in Birmingham , Alabama, I'm David Black, KB4KCH, for The Amateur Radio Newsline.

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While there are well over a dozen restructuring proposals already before the FCC only one has really gotten any major attention of the ham radio community. That’s the plan offered up by the A-R-R-L and referred to by Gist. As we go to air, no Rule Making designation has been assigned by the FCC to the Foundations regulatory change request. (QRZ.COM, ARNewsline(tm))

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THE BPL FIGHT: WHAT HAMS CAN DO

Meantime, the story that refuses to go away has yet some new twists. Of coarse we are referring to the imminent introduction of Broadband Over Powerline Internet access, and the massive interference that ham radio operators believe it will create. Amateur Radio Newsline’s Mark Abramovicz, NT3V, is here with

the latest:

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Now that the FCC has released the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in the Broadband Over Powerlines issue, it's time for amateurs to look it over, digest it and begin composing a well-reasoned letter or e-mail.

So says Jim Haynie W5JBP the American Radio League's president. Here are some things in the filing you might consider.

"Noise levels, potential interference both ingress and egress. Those are things that need to be addressed, " Haynie says. "Public relations: What's going to happen when you get on the air on 20 meters and you knock 10 of your neighbors off line all of sudden? They call the local power company, it's a public relations nightmare."

Haynie says once you decide to write that letter, keep in mind it has to be supported with facts.

"I don't see much water being drawn if somebody writes a letter and says, 'Well, this is good for this and it's good for that and it's going to interfere with my ham radio hobby and stuff.' I never, ever use the word hobby to anybody in the Washington. It's the Amateur Radio Service," Haynie says.

"And what you've got to do is use a little bit more fact, a little bit more of concrete-type evidence that you can conclude on your own. And that's pretty simple to do. It's got to be well-reasoned arguments. It can't be emotional argument."

And, once you've finished the letter or e-mail, Haynie says make a copy or print a copy of what you've prepared.

"Put it in an envelope with your QSL card and send it into your local representative at his district office, not in Washington but his district office," Haynie advises. "I'm just amazed how much power that letter has to your local congressman and your local senator when you mail it to one of his local district offices."

Haynie continues to express disappointment the FCC failed to wait for a report from the National Telecommunications Information Agency. The agency oversees radio spectrum use by government agencies and services, including the military. He says its technicians have been busy at BPL trial sites across the country.

"We know that they've done over 18,000 measurements over the last four months in the various (BPL) test areas," Haynie says. "We have gotten actually photographs of their trucks, we've seen them working hard at it. And that's what surprised me that the commission rolled this out before the information was made available.

"We were told by NTIA that it would be available the first part of this year. Now in government-speak, I don't know what that means. I know we got, the League's got petitions sitting up in the commission now since I took office as president in 2000. It is 2004 and they're still sittting on somebody's desk.

"So, FCC and NTIA, I'm sure, have their own timetables and they're not going to

worry about what the ARRL or what some ham radio operators think about it. They're going to do their own work in the own way in their own time."

Haynie hopes the NTIA finishes its work soon and gets its report to the FCC pronto. He says it's clear BPL is targeted for special FCC attention.

"I think they'll put this on the fastest of fast tracks and get something going," Haynie says. "Typically, the window, the comment window will be 45-60 days. I'd be really surprised if they gave it 90 days.

"And, once that's done they start the wheels in motion and they'll (FCC) be under tremendous pressure from industry to get this thing out the door."

Haynie says the amateur radio service has allies in this fight and he's confident they will submit comments or speak to their congressmen or senators. Haynie says he's both cautious and optimistic about the outcome.

"I'm very concerned because I've seen the speed at which this thing has happened," Haynie says. "And I've seen the comments that the commission has made and I've seen the denials that the industry has made.

"And it just doesn't make sense. There's something more behind this. And I know people are going to say it's the almighty dollar. And that's true, it probably is. You're looking at millions and millions and millions of dollars of investment here.

"But there's something that just doesn't smell right, I guess, is what I'm trying to say. So, until I get a better handle and the League - our staff people get a better handle on where this is going and trust me we're on top of it every day - I'm just going to be to on the little plus side of a little cautious."

And finally, Haynie says to those who think the ARRL and other hams are overreacting like Chicken Little who cried out: The sky is falling! The sky is falling! He has these sobering thoughts.

"Just because we want, doesn't mean that we get our way. And I'm concerned about that," Haynie says. "And I'm concerned about another possibility that's probably the horror of all horrors.

"And that is if the (BPL) rollout is so big and you get tens of hundreds of thousands of people on, suddenly amateur radio relegates down to the same level as Part 15. That would be the most horrible thing that could happen to amateur radio."

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Mark Abramowicz, NT3V, in Philadelphia

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To read or download the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking from the FCC on Broadband over Powerlines, you can find it on the FCC's website: www-dot-fcc-dot gov. And, to learn more more about the ARRL's position, go to www.arrl.org. (ARNewsline(tm))

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Break 1

>From the United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline, heard on bulletin stations around the world including the Flint Area Independent Repeaters serving the city of Flint Michigan.

(5 sec pause here)

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THE BPL FIGHT: A WIN IN 4X4-LAND

Even though the BPL outlook looks a bit grim here in the United States, there has been a big win over in Israel. Hagal International says that equipment for the networking of computers over the A C power mains being sold in the country was found to be causing interference to High Frequency spectrum users. As a result, Israel's Ministry of Communications requested an explanation from the distributor of this equipment on how to remedy the problem. The distributor did one better. The company replied that it had discontinued the sales of the interfering devices. (Hagal International)

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RADIO HONORS: W. VA GOVERNORS FATHER WA8AYP REMEMBERED

Here in West Virginia, Governor Bob Wise strolled into his reception hall last week to present a check to Kanawha County officials. Little did he know that those officials – and some amateur radio operators – had a very special surprise for him.

The money, fifty thousand dollars, was awarded to the county for the purchase of amateur radio equipment for the metro area's new emergency operations center, and a new mobile command post.

As he usually does when speaking about amateur radio, Governor Wise began to reminisce about his father. He recalled hearing the sounds of CW from his father's Hallicrafters receiver wafting into his bedroom at night. He even remembered his father's amateur callsign, WA8AYP. At that moment, his attention was directed to a nearby FT-847 to receive a message.

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Audio only: Hear it at www.arnewsline.org on the MP3 audio file of this newscast.

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That's control operator Bill Hunter, K8BS, telling the governor via amateur radio that his father's callsign is now the club callsign of the Kanawha County ARES/RACES group. The announcement was not only a complete surprise, the governor appeared clearly touched. After a moment, he quipped, "Hey, do I get a QSL card for this?" He was quickly presented with a specially designed QSL card. After the ceremony, the governor signed copies of those cards, and posed for pictures with the estimated 75 ham operators in

attendance.

The surprise was the brainchild of Kanawha County Commission President Kent Carper, W8CHS, who appears to be one politician who can keep a secret.

Robert Wise, Senior became a silent key in 1986. He was active in emergency communications during the 1960's and 70's. (ARNewsline(tm))

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RADIO HONORS: FCC NAMED TO RECEIVE NCAI LEADERSHIP AWARD

The FCC has been named by the National Congress of American Indians to be the 2004 recipient of it's prestigious NCAI Leadership Award. The regulatory agency was selected based on its outstanding leadership and ongoing commitment and support to American Indians and Alaska Natives.

The National Congress of American Indians gives only three of these awards annually. One goes to Congress, one goes to the Administration, and one goes to another deserving entity. This year's recipients are House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Richard Pombo of California, the US Commission on Civil Rights, and the FCC. (FCC)

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HAM RADIO TESTING: QPC WITHDRAWS A GENERAL TEST QUESTION

The Question Pool Committee of the National Conference of Volunteer Examination Coordinators has announced the withdrawal Question G5B11 from the Element 3 General class question pool. The QPC says that the question deleted asked what would be the RMS voltage if you combined two or more sine wave voltages?

According to QPC Chairman Scotty Newstadter, W4WW, the withdrawal refers to question G5B11 in the new, December 1, 2003, released General pool. It is not referring to the same numbered question in the pool that expires at midnight, June 30, 2004. (QPC, W4WW)

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ENFORCEMENT: JACK GERRITSEN, EX-KG6IRO IN JAIL

Californian Jack Gerritsen, the ex-KG6IRO, will be spending time in jail, but not for his alleged interference to ham radio repeaters in the Los Angeles area.

On Monday, February 23rd, Federal Court Judge Carolyn Turchin sentenced Gerritsen to 30 days in jail and ordered him to pay a $2500 fine on a tresspassing charge. In passing sentence, judge Turchin explained that she could not place Gerritsen on formal probation as the U-S Attorney asked, because he was going to spend his entire sentence in jail with no time left for probation. The Judge told Gerritsen that he has until May 15th to pay the fine or a lien will be placed on his home in the city of Bell.

Gerritsen's alleged harassment of area repeaters had brought numerous letters to the court asking that it bar him from operating any sort of radio transmitter. In a statement to the court Judge Turchin noted that she had read

many of the notes sent to her by the amateur community but that she would not be able to take them into consideration for this case. This was because the charges were brought because Gerritsen failed to obey a sign in the Courthouse and entered a door to the roof of the building.

Judge Turchin did say that she she would forward all the letters to the Federal Probation Department to be put in Gerritsen's file. The ex-KG6IRO was then taken into custody by U.S. Marshals and escorted away. (ARNewsline(tm))

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WITH THE ARRL: LEAGUE LOOKING FOR COMMENTS ON VHF+ CONTESTING

The ARRL is looking for input from VHF and UHF contesters to help improve the radiosporting events they take part in. According to a posting top the VHF Reflector by New England Division Director Tom Frenaye, K1KI, for the last year or so the League has been studying ways to increase interest and participation in VHF and above contests and awards. Now its ready to go further and it is inviting the ham community to take part. We have more in this report:

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Tom Frenaye, K1KI, heads up the ARRL's VHF-UHF Contest and Awards Subcommittee. He says that changes to the contest rules and awards programs should be designed to do three things. First, to encourage more people to work more other people. Second, to bolster the number of QSO's made over longer distances. And lastly, to encourage more people to just join in and participate.

Because of this, there are now some recommendations coming from those in the ARRL who have studied the situation. These incclude making changes in the QSO points and rover rules. Also under consideration is limiting the June VHF QSO Party to the bands from 50 to 1296 MHz only, expanding the Microwave contest based on 10 GHz Cumulative and dropping the current UHF contest. Added would be new contest categories in January, June and September.

Frenaye notes that these major recommendations, and a number of minor ones, are still just that -- recommendations. He says that the ARRL feels it is now very important to have further input from the VHF and above contest community before proceeding. He asks all contesters interested in these bands to take an in-depth look at the preoposed changes and then to respond. He hopes that a lot of you will.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Norm Seeley, KI7UP, reporting.

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You can e-mail your ideas and comments on or before March 7th to vhf-contest-proposal@arrl.org. (K1KI via VHF Reflector)

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CW SAVVY: A MORSE CODE SYMBOL FOR THE "AT SIGN"

Computer fanatics who also like operating C-W listen up. Radio Currents Online for February 16th says that the International Morse Code is being updated to include a new character for the "at sign".   In December, the International

Telecommunications Union voted to create the character which will be known as a commat. The commat is made up of dot-dash for the letter A and dash-dot-dash-dot which we all know is the letter C. The two characters are combined with no space between them giving Morse code web surfers an easy way to send an e-mail address or the location of a webpage. (CGC)

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CONVENTIONS AND HAPPENINGS: THE QCWA 2004 HAMVENTON DINNER

On the convention scene, word that the Quarter Century Wireless Association will hold its 2004 Hamvention Banquet at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, May 14th. Hosted by hosted by South West Ohio Chapter 9 the location this year is Alex's Continental Restaurant near the Dayton suburb of Miamisburg. Cost per person is $ 17.00 and advance reservations are required. Send requests and payment to Jerry Ragland, 409 Park Avenue, Franklin, Ohio, 45005. (QCWA)

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ARRL SM ELECTIONS: THE RESULTS ARE IN

Turning to names in the news, word that Patrick Bunsold, WA6MHZ, has elected as the ARRL San Diego Section Manager in the only contested election this winter. Bunsold received 378 votes and his opponent, Stephen Early, AD6VI, garnered only 258 votes.

Election ballots were counted February 24 at ARRL Headquarters. Bunsold's two-year term of office begins on April 1st. All other Section Managers standing for re-election ran unopposed. (ARRL)

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NAMES IN THE NEWS: THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CONTROL ROOM GLASS

And Amateur Radio Newsline President and Producer, Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, is now the author of a new column dealing with ham radio operators working in the broadcasting profession appearing on the famed HalEisner.Com website.

Bill’s calls his commentary “The Other Side of the Control Room Glass.” It tells the stories of famous and no-so-famous people in the broadcast profession who share a common interest in Amateur Radio and the way in which being a ham has affected their careers.

The column began on Sunday, February 22nd with the first of a 4-part tribute to the late Roy Neal, K6DUE. This series will include a retrospective on Neal’s successful effort to put a manned Amateur Radio station into space.

“The Other Side of the Control Room Glass” becomes a monthly feature of the website in April. You can read it on-line at www.haleisner.com (ARNewsline(tm))

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BREAK 2

This is ham radio news for today’s radio amateur. From the United States of

America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline with links to the world from our only official website at www.arnewsline.org and being relayed by the volunteer services of the following radio amateur:

(5 sec pause here)

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HAMS HELPING HAMS: THE MIKE NEWBOLD, K0YO FUND

A fund to help 6 meter rover operator Mike Newbold, K0YO. It was set up by a group of hams who value Newbold's contributions by putting his life on-the-line to get rare grid squares on the air. And late last year it almost cost him his life. Bruce Tennant, K6PZW, has the rest of the story:

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According to a posting on QRZ.com made for Phil Krichbaum, N0KE , Mike Newbold, K0YO, was vacationing in Baja Mexico just before Christmas 2003. He was savagely beaten with a pipe, robbed and left for dead. The same thugs also killed two Canadian surfers who were camping about 100 yards away from Newbold and threw their bodies and those of their dogs over a cliff.

Kirchbaum says that Newbold crawled 3 kilometers on his hands and knees through cactus and over rocks to a road where he had a better chance of being located. Some surfers from Los Angeles found him the next day. They took him to a medical facility and contacted the police. They then transported Newbold back to California for further medical treatment. Newbold then went back to Steamboat Springs, Colorado, where his son took him for additional medical care and then home for a Christmas eve dinner. Kirchbaum says he has since visited Newbold brought him a 2 meter F-M radio donated by Bob Ludtke, K9MWM. Thats where he learned that the value of items lost and stolen in Baja easily exceeds $10,000.

To help defray the cost of replacing Newbold's pick-up truck, camper and ham radio gear that he and Gary Yantis, W0TM have established he Mike Newbold Fund. If anyone would care to make a donation to help get Newbold back on the road to rare grids, please contact W0TM or N0KE. Their respective e-mail addresses are gyantis@midtec.com and pfkski@vail.net.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Bruce Tennant, K6PZW, in Los Angeles.

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You can read more about Mike Newbold, K0YO, and what happened to him on-line on line on the newspages at www.qrz.com (QRZ.COM)

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: SUCCESSFUL OHIO ISS CONTACT

Friday, February 20th was a great day for youngsters at Ohio's Glenwood Elementary School. That's when International Space Station Commander Mike Foale, KB5UAC successfully answered questions from a number of students. Better yet, Bill Chalkin, KA8VIT, in nearby South Euclid was listening and recording. Take a listen to a ham radio from space:

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In all, sixteen students got to question KB5UAC about life on-orbit. According to the AMSAT News Service preliminary reports indicate the space station side of the conversation was heard as far East as Boston and Baltimore. (AMSAT, ARNewsline(tm) with audio from KA8VIT)

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INTERNATIONAL - WORLDWIDE: NO RECIPROCAL 5 MHZ OPERATIONS

Turning to international news, a reminder that holders of United Kingdom 5 MHz operating permits are reminded that CEPT international operating rules does not apply to 5 Mhz. The only countries currently allowing 5 MHz operation by individual stations are the United Kingdom and the United States. Only club stations are presently being allowed to use 5 MHz in Finland and operations by stations in Norway and New Zealand are for internal emergency communications purposes only. Stations in Canada may use 5 MHz frequencies at agreed specified times but activity from Germany is not currently permitted. (GB2RS)

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ON THE AIR: FIELD DAY 2004 - JUNE 26-27

Turning to operating events, the ARRL Letter says that rules and entry packets for the 2004 running of ARRL Field Day now are available on the League’s Website. The ARRL Letter notes that Field Day is always the fourth full weekend of June. This year it’s June 26th and 27th with activity beginning at 1800 UTC Saturday and ends at 2100 UTC Sunday.

There are no rules changes from 2003. Participation in Field Day now is open to all amateurs within IARU Region 2. Field Day stations may contact stations in other regions for point credit, but stations outside Region 2 are not eligible to submit entries for this event.

More information is on-line at www.arrl.org (ARRL)

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DX

In D-X, I2YSB, I2MOV, IK1AOD and IK2DIA, have been on the air from Tokelau signing slash ZK3. They now say that they plan to be active portable 5 W from Samoa on all bands and modes between the 29th of February and 8th of March. Look for them on the usual D-X frequencies. (GB2RS)

Also, K4ISV and K4CN will be active slash VP5 from North Caicos Islands through the 17th of March. They will also participate in the CQ 160-Metre SSB contest as VP5B. QSL as directed on the air. (GB2RS)

And a Galapagos Islands "HC8/HD8 DX Diploma" is now being issued by the DX-TA-SEA DX Club. This multicolored certificate is awarded to Amateur Radio operators and short wave Listeners for confirming a minimum of 3 different HC8 or HD8 stations in the Galapagos Islands. All contacts or SWL reports made after November 20, 1945 are eligable. Submissions and information requests go to Dr. Rick Dorsch, NE8Z, P.O. BOX 616, Hamburg, Michigan 48139 -0616 (NE8Z)

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RADIOSPORTS: HES OFF AND WALKING

He’s on the road again. We are talking about Tony Whitaker, G3RKL, who is off on his latest trek. Amateur Radio Newslie’s Jim Meachen, ZL2BHF, has the details:

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His short walk has begun!:

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Audio only: Hear it at www.arnewsline.org on the MP3 audio file of this newscast.

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That’s the voice of Tony Whitaker, G3RKL, as he begins his pre-announced trek from Invercargill to Blenheim. What’s amazing is that recording comes to you from the other side of the world. From the United Kingdom, where it was recorded by Ian Abel, G3ZHI, in Yorkshire England. How? Through the magic of Internet linked repeaters that will allow the world of Amateur Radio to follow Tony’s almost every step of the way:

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Audio only: Hear it at www.arnewsline.org on the MP3 audio file of this newscast.

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During his stroll Whitaker will be on the air using the special callsign ZL6SHS.   And -- you will literally find him operating everywhere including HF, VHF and UHF. And when access to an IRLP or Echolink equipped repeater is available, he just might pop up in your back yard, eager to say hello.

So, keep an ear open for Tony Whitaker, G3RKL, as ZL6SHS as he jauntily saunters the length of New Zealands South Island. He might be coming to an Internet linked repeater in your hometown and right to your H T.

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Audio only: Hear it at www.arnewsline.org on the MP3 audio file of this newscast.

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With thanks to Ian Abel, G3ZHI, for the audio of Tony’s first few minutes on the road, I’m Jim Meachen, ZL2BHF, reporting from Auckland, New Zealand for the Amateur Radio Newsline.

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With access to Echolink and IRLP now quite common you can expect to hear more from G3RKL here on Newsline in the coming weeks. (ARNewsline(tm) with audio supplied by G3ZHI)

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NEWSCAST CLOSE

With thanks to Alan Labs, AMSAT, the ARRL, the CGC Communicator, CQ Magazine, the FCC, the Ohio Penn DX Bulletin, Radio Netherlands, Rain, the RSGB and Australia's Q-News, that's all from the Amateur Radio Newsline(tm). Our e-mail address is newsline @arnewsline.org. More information is available at Amateur Radio Newsline's(tm) only official website located at www.arnewsline.org. You can also write to us or support us at Amateur Radio Newsline(tm), P.O. Box 660937, Arcadia, California 91066.

A reminder that the newly created Roy Neal, K6DUE, Amateur Radio Mentoring Project is up and operating. We already have signed up over two dozen hams who are willing to assist others. If you can help, or if you need assistance please drop a note with your name, address, hone number and area of expertise to mentor@arnewsline.org and we will get back to you as fast as we can.

For now, with Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, at the editors desk, I’m Jim Damron, N8TMW, and I’m Jeff Clark, K8JAC, saying 73 and we thank you for listening."
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